

ANGLICANISM IN THE SHADOW OF HARVARD COLLEGE:

An Edition of East Apthorp's

Considerations on the Institution and Conduct  
of the Society for the Propagation of the Gos-  
pel in Foreign Parts. 1763

with

Historical Introduction and Comments

by

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### Considerations on the Institution and Conduct of the S.P.G.,

including the original text, with additional notes  
and appendices. . . . .following page 41

In 1763, a pamphlet appeared from a Boston printer entitled Considerations on the Institution and Conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Its author was The Rev. East Apthorp, the missionary to the first congregation of Anglicans in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although born in Boston, East Apthorp had been educated in England, and shortly after his return to the colonies, took on the challenge of becoming an S.P.G. missionary. In order to assess the issues involved in this pamphlet, it is first necessary to get a larger picture of the purposes and history of the Society itself, both from the Anglican and Dissenting viewpoints, in New England.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was founded in 1701 by Charter<sup>1</sup> of King William III of England. Although not an official agency of the Church of England, its purpose was to spread that faith into "Plantations, Colonies and Factories beyond the Seas, belonging to our Kingdome of England," where "the Provision for Ministers is very mean." Because of this "Want of Learned and Orthodox ministers," the people in those areas "seem to be abandoned to atheism and Infidelity" or are subject to "divers Romish Priests and Jesuits" trying to draw them into "Popish Superstition and Idolatry." In order to oppose these evils, King William ordained this Society to gather the necessary funds and select and maintain missionaries. The generosity which he felt he was showing is apparent in the seal of the Society (frontispiece). It was described as "A ship under sail, making towards a point of land; upon the prow standing a minister with an open Bible in his hand; people standing on the shore in a posture of expectation, and using these words,

Transiens adjuva nos."<sup>2</sup>

The Archbishop of Canterbury was automatically President of the Society, and the Bishops of the Church of England were all members. An annual meeting was held, which was addressed by a different bishop each year. Financially, the Society depended on voluntary contributions, both from lump sums and from annual subscriptions. According to one source, the income from 1710 to 1750 was 2150 pounds annually; from 1750 to 1770, 4000 pounds annually, with a large drop during the revolutionary period of the 1770's. But since expenses exceeded income every year, it was suggested that a collection be taken in churches to support the SPG. The Queen in 1710 authorized such a collection on Trinity Sunday, the returns of which totaled 3060 pounds. Two more collections were made in 1713 and 1717. It was not until 1741 that a collection was made throughout all of England; it totaled 15,022 pounds. The next collection, which was made after the American Revolution, netted an additional 4000 pounds. Even with the substantial money raised by these regal decrees, the SPG's expansion during the period from 1740 to 1770 required large amounts of voluntary support to continue its operations.

The Society sought missionaries who could satisfactorily meet requirements gathered under several headings. The prospective missionary was asked to have other clergy comment on his "temper, prudence, learning and sober and pious conversation." More generally, the Society was interested in "his zeal for the Christian Religion, and Diligence in his Holy Calling, His Affection to the present Government, and His Conformity to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England."<sup>3</sup> They were aware that the missionary would have to face tremendous challenges to his faith, and so were only interested in sending those persons who showed the firmest basis for success. Of course, as the scope of the

SPG's work increased, it was more difficult to find qualified individuals who would give up their positions in England for the uncertainty of the colonies.

By the 1740's, the Society had missionaries in many places throughout the world. The Annual Sermons before the Society continually emphasized the importance of this work, giving several explanations of its significance. The dominant point was simply that religion was at the basis of society's rewards and punishments. Besides spreading "Love and Charity," it could still "give Force to all the external Duties of Morality" and instill "those Virtues to which human Laws can only enforce an outward Submission...."<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, religion served a spiritual function which in turn led to benefits for the state. But why were individuals who were qualified expected to become missionaries? Several preachers emphasized their belief that the age of miracles had ended. The coming of Jesus, the man-god, was to them evidence that "God thought fit at the first to make Use of Human Agency in the Establishment of Christianity" and therefore it must "be perpetuated and continued by the same Means."<sup>5</sup> One bishop added the important limitation that men must serve God's plan "by means consistent with that liberty, which he hath made essential to all rational creatures."<sup>6</sup> The missionary was not justified in violating any man's free will in rejecting or accepting Christianity, if this command were to be taken literally. But this limitation did not lessen the missionaries' zeal in spreading the gospel.

To a great extent, the SPG served as a force for renewing the failing faith of many Anglicans long lacking clerical guidance. But particularly in New England, it was aimed at convincing the Dissenters of their error in having left the Anglican Church. The missionaries were prepared to attack the dissenting church and they emphasized their pride in each

convert they gained. They believed their religion was a particularly necessary element in the general good of the British Empire. It was essential for them to be "instrumental" in spreading their faith "and as we have greater Opportunities than other Protestant Powers, by Means of our extensive Commerce, and that Wealth which is the Consequence of such a Commerce, this Consideration affords an additional Obligation."<sup>7</sup> Implied in this statement is the realization that a sound religious condition is a good basis for successful commercial endeavors, ultimately to the benefit of the mother country. Another bishop elaborated on this implication by stating, "May it not be reasonably presumed, that the Inhabitants in our Colonies will be more faithful, more dutiful, and more to be depended upon, if properly instructed in the Doctrines of our Religion?"<sup>8</sup> Indeed it may; and the influence of an organization one author felt "pointed to the 'propagation' of living branches of the Mother Church in other lands, not merely to the promotion of religion,"<sup>9</sup> could be important in many areas of life besides the specifically religious.

Armed with these defenses of their work, the missionaries were sent throughout the world, including the New England colonies. An early report on the religious condition of that area misleadingly stated that, "we found several New England ministers very well affected to the Church, some of whom...requested us to preach in their congregations...were it not for the poysonous doctrines that have been infused into the scholars and youths there, [they] would soon be brought over to the Church."<sup>10</sup> However, the missionaries discovered that hostility to their efforts existed and grew as their work expanded. Many of the Dissenters argued that their Protestant clergy were included under the phrase "Orthodox Clergy" found in the Society's charter. New England was neither an Anglican religious state nor in great danger of falling into atheism; their

religious order was that of independent Protestant churches made up originally of Puritan dissenters from the Anglican Church. The Anglican view was that the Society ought to provide an Orthodox (Anglican) clergy to reclaim former Anglicans who had lost touch with the Church and provide an option for those who were dissatisfied with the existing order. The opposition held that the Society was the first step in their loss of the liberty they had enjoyed previously, being virtually ignored by the mother country.

In support of the proponents' view, one should note that the Society received many requests for missionaries from the New England colonies. Stamford and Greenwich, Connecticut, for example, in 1747 and 1748, requested new missionaries to serve each town. At that time, they were served indirectly by the minister to a third town. Included with their requests were letters from established missionary outposts vouching for their sincerity. The town of Groton, Connecticut, sent the Society "A Declaration of Faith asserted unto by the Church of Groton," which presented a relatively long credal statement. They confessed all the major Anglican beliefs in their statement. It was signed by Ebenezer Punderson, an SPG missionary, and eight others, although those eight individuals included three people with one family name and two with another. Obviously there was some support for Anglican missionaries.

East Apthorp was among those who argued that the Anglicans were justified in sending missionaries to New England, even though "there were already Christian assemblies established and supported" there, because "there are several things, which the consciences of many...cannot acquiesce in; who were not therefore to be left destitute of public worship." He went on to emphasize that "we have settled no Clergyman any where without the inhabitants requesting it and contributing to it."<sup>11</sup> The



Anglicans simply could not understand why this position was offensive to the dissenters. Objections from these people, among whom "wealth and Civil Faction have, as usual, inflamed religious zeal,"<sup>12</sup> were not to be tolerated; the Anglicans would not avoid the confrontation.

Perhaps the most hopeful sign of life for any new movement is the successful conversion of prominent members of the opposition to the new view. The Anglican course gained several such converts. The so-called "great apostacy" occurred in 1722 when some five faculty members of Yale College, led by the Rector, Timothy Cutler, converted to Anglicanism.<sup>13</sup> John Beach, an Anglican missionary who himself had converted from the dissenting church, noted that Cutler traded his lucrative and prestigious position for the less materially rewarding missionary life and relative obscurity in Stratford, Connecticut.<sup>14</sup> Beach believed there was some deep spiritual reason for this conversion that transcended concerns for security and fame. The Classified Digest noted (p. 44) that of eighty-three missionaries sent into New England during the early and mid-eighteenth century, over a quarter were raised as Dissenters. Besides Cutler, Samuel Seabury, father of the first Anglican bishop in America, and Edward Bass, later Bishop of Massachusetts, were converts.

The Dissenters, as one would expect, viewed these individuals as traitors to the cause of true religion and virulently attacked their writings and defenses of Anglican failings. Jonathan Mayhew, Charles Chauncy and Noah Hobart all wrote extensively in opposition to the Anglicans. When the Anglicans began calling for bishops in the American colonies, these writers reacted immediately and violently. Their memories of Puritan persecutions under Archbishop Laud convinced them that the Anglicans were out to destroy their religious freedom. Several authors saw the Society's primary aim as the conversion of English

dissenters in New England and then conversion of the heathen Negroes and Indians. This position was even assumed by at least one author who favored the SPG.<sup>15</sup> The New Englanders believed that the Society intentionally flooded their colonies with Anglican clergy and called for bishops in the colonies in order to regain more complete political control than ever before. One author noted that even though the Society's ideas were to avoid political dealings, their plan for resident bishops was clearly a political stance. He believed civil force would be involved in setting up bishops.<sup>16</sup> One pamphleteer claimed that some requests for missionaries, "particularly in those parts of North Carolina which were intirely destitute of ministers," were being ignored because the SPG was really more concerned with political control of New England.<sup>17</sup>

In response to these charges, the missionaries argued that their new members came to them voluntarily. Archbishop Secker believed that the Anglican liturgy and theological precepts appealed to the disillusioned members of New England's religious order.<sup>18</sup> A recent study indicated that the 1744 petition of a group of New England converts could be helpful on this point. The petitioners, residents of Northbury, "were strongly prejudiced against the Church from the very cradle. But they were appalled by the 'flood of confusion' caused by the revivalists' 'insufferable enthusiastick whims and extemporaneous jargon.'...They fairly fled to her for safety, hoping that the purity of their hearts and lives would be 'comformable to her excellent doctrine.'"<sup>19</sup> John Beach bluntly argued "...that it is not Schism, but a necessary Duty, to forsake the Communion of those, who pretend to be Ministers of Christ, and yet are so far from having it, that they Scoff at it and ridicule it."<sup>20</sup> The teachings of the Church were spread by the distribution of Common Prayer books and other religious books and pamphlets

supplied to the missionaries by the Society. These printed materials were perhaps the strongest evidence of any design to proselytize among the Dissenters. A letter from Beach, for example, explains some of the theological disputes which such literature could be used to combat. The local independent clergy "expressly deny that there is any law of grace, which promises eternal life upon condition of faith, repentance and sincere obedience, and assert justification only by the law of innocence and sinless obedience." Beach responded to this by saying, "I think myself obliged, by my ordination vow, to guard my people against such strange doctrines."<sup>21</sup> Beach's involvement in "controversy" with some of the Dissenting clergy can be seen as a way of reaching independent laymen to convince them of the error of their religious beliefs. The missionary sees himself, however, as responding to the offensive of the Independents.

The missionaries also noted the legal disadvantages which limited their success in New England. "In 1725, six of the Clergy of New England [complained]...of the annoyance and oppression to which those, who, for conscience' sake, united themselves to the Church, were subjected especially by imprisonment for non-payment of taxes towards the support of dissenting teachers...."<sup>22</sup> Improvement was slight as late as 1743; John Beach (a Dissenter who converted, became a missionary to Newtown and later wrote in defense of the Anglicans) stated that:

The case of my people is very hard. If on the Lord's Day they continue at home, they must be punished [namely fined]; if they meet to worship God according to the Church of England, in the best manner they can, the mulct is still greater; and if they go to the Independent meeting, they must endure the mortification of hearing the doctrines and worship of the Church vilified and the important truths of Christianity obscured and enervated by enthusiastic and antinomian dreams.<sup>23</sup>

Another author noted that failure to attend Sunday and Thanksgiving Day services in Connecticut resulted in a five-shilling fine. For the second offense, one could pay a fine of five pounds or stand in public on a lecture day for two hours with a placard around one's neck reading "An Open and Obstinate Contemner of God's Holy Ordinances."<sup>24</sup> A relatively recent (1962) history of the Diocese of Connecticut acknowledged this general intolerance. Some improvement gradually occurred when "the authorities gradually realized that dissent had come to stay. They feared that continued intolerance would displease the British government and endanger their precious charter. They also wanted to court the support of non-Episcopal dissenters in opposing the project for a colonial bishop. The result was a series of grudging concessions to religious freedom."<sup>25</sup> Such concessions would have been delayed longer but for the SPG efforts in New England. To be sure, part of this need to spread the true faith was also a need to encourage increased political obedience to England. One of the most blatant examples of the Society's desire to have its missionaries deal with such political objectives was clear in its instructions to the missionaries issued in 1756, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War.<sup>26</sup> The first new instruction was that the missionaries were, "To endeavour, with the utmost Care and Zeal, in this critical Conjunction, to Support His Majesty's Government..." and "[to] make the People sensible of the great Blessing they enjoy, in the free Exercise of their Religion, and the Advantages of lawful Government, under the benign Reign of a Protestant Prince." As the later instructions suggested, "implacable Ambition" was the villainous force which threatened "to change the happy Condition of our American Fellow-Subjects, under the best of Kings, for certain Tyranny, wretched Superstition and Popist Idolatry, with it's constant Attendant, grievous Persecution." Instruction

number four (p. 45) gave an explanation of the limitations on these efforts. Missionaries were called upon to "inculcate Submission to Government and Obedience to Authority, not only for Wrath but also for Conscience Sake; exhorting your people faithfully and chearfully to pay Tribute to whom Tribute is due." They were also to exhort them to "willingly submit to this unavoidable Expence, as the only Means of preserving their Religion, and their Liberty." But they were not to forget "the 11th Instruction given you by the Society (viz) 'that you take special Care to give no Offence to the Civil Government, by intermeddling in Affairs not relating to your own Calling and Function.'" This careful statement emphasized the existence of an emergency situation which required extraordinary willingness to organize in mutually supportive arrangements. The focus of these arrangements was to be the governments of the colonies, which represented the British crown. The New Englanders had not been traditionally responsive to the needs of the Empire. Such a call for political obedience to England was a threat to their traditions of independence. The attached reminder that the missionaries were not to meddle in essentially civil affairs provided little comfort for the most fearful Dissenters.

An even more threatening proposal to them was the repeated efforts of the missionaries to establish a colonial bishopric. The missionaries believed that such a resident bishop would help to provide leadership and direction for their efforts. The episcopal form of church government was one of the major disputed concepts between Anglicans and virtually all but Catholic non-conformists. The Dissenters' forebears had suffered persecution at the hands of Archbishop Laud and others; they had maintained a fear of the powers of any bishop as a result. But as early as the mid-Seventeenth Century, the Anglicans were planning to send

a bishop to New England. In 1638, Laud hoped to institute a bishop with full civil and ecclesiastical powers into the young and hostile early settlements.<sup>27</sup> Laud's execution and the Cromwellian interlude provided a long delay in a renewal of interest in the plan. By 1713, the first official plea for a bishop in New England came from King's Chapel in Boston, which had been founded in 1690 and had angered the colonials from the very start. The bishop would have been sent if Queen Anne's death had not intervened. The next major attempt was made in 1748, when Bishop Sherlock of London, believing that a "not inconsiderable party" of Anglicans were in the colonies, favored sending bishops with the limitations that (1) they would hold no "coercive" powers; (2) they would not be supported by colonial taxation; and (3) they would not be sent to New England or Pennsylvania.<sup>28</sup> Matthew Graves, a missionary in Connecticut, heard only that the call for an American bishop had been sounded, not that New England was excluded. The local rumors were that "an English bishop might be expected momentarily." Apparently, Graves' life was made more arduous because of the negative reaction to the rumored plan.<sup>29</sup> This plan was successfully squashed in England; Sherlock apparently had a reputation for being over-zealous.<sup>30</sup> An almost identical plan was suggested in 1750 by Bishop Joseph Butler of Durham, except that he wanted bishops with ecclesiastical powers in New England as well as the other colonies.<sup>31</sup> This plan apparently received no hearing at all.

A decade later, Samuel Johnson renewed efforts at gaining an American bishop. He believed that the civil liberties of Anglicans were in danger, particularly in New England. He wanted a bishop so that the Anglican missionaries would be better prepared to compete with the well-organized Independents. He also recommended a consolidation of Massachusetts,

Connecticut and Rhode Island into a single colonial unit.<sup>32</sup> His position must have encouraged colonial resentment of the plan, or any plan that called for the formation of a competing religious structure and a major alteration in the political organization of New England. But the basic conception of Anglican bishops in America argued in theory for a purely ecclesiastical functionary.

Perhaps the most exact statement of the proposal for a bishop can be found in a pamphlet written by the Reverend Thomas Chandler, the Rector of St. John's Church in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, printed in 1767. He made a clear and valuable statement describing the kind of bishop that was desired; this statement was the subject of numerous dissenting complaints outlined later in this essay.

That the Bishops to be sent to America, shall have no Authority, but purely of a Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Nature...—That this Authority shall operate only upon the Clergy of the Church, and not upon the Laity nor Dissenters of Any Denomination—That the Bishops shall not interfere with the Property or Privileges, whether civil or religious, of Churchmen or Dissenters—That, in particular, they shall have no Concern with the Probate of Wills, Letters of Guardianship and Administration, or Marriage-Licenses, nor be Judges of any Cases relating thereto—But, that they shall only...ordain and govern the Clergy, and administer Confirmation to those who shall desire it.<sup>33</sup>

This statement and Chandler's pamphlet indicate the major aspects of the issue. The first aspect is the limitation of the proposed bishop to purely ecclesiastical concerns. Archbishop Secker expressly stated that such prelates should not "hold Courts to try Matrimonial or Testamentary Causes" or in any way infringe any "Privileges and Liberties" enjoyed by the laity of any church.<sup>34</sup> Chandler's pamphlet also maintained that colonists had no need to worry about tithing. He summarized the ancient rights of the English Church to one tenth of the estates and

emphasized that there was no historical precedent for tithes in the colonies.<sup>35</sup> It seems evident that there was no explicit desire to gain civil power. But the comments made by Samuel Johnson in the privacy of a letter suggest that this sort of spiritual leader may have been designed as the beginning of a potentially powerful new force.

Given this limitation, the main purposes for a bishop are those of ordaining and governing the clergy and confirming the baptized churchmen who desired it. Without a resident bishop, it was necessary to have potential missionaries such as East Apthorp sent on the long and dangerous journey to England for ordination, and then back to the colonies to minister. One author noted that many youths were willing to be ordained, but were not prepared to make the journey. "Had a theological college been founded, and a Bishop sent forth to ordain elders in every city, and to care for the interests of the Church, many, doubtless, would have ranged themselves on her side who were led by the circumstances of their position to take part against her."<sup>36</sup> As a result, many of the clergy were not colonial residents, but clergy from the British isles. Apparently many of them had difficulty in living an exemplary life. Many of the colonials complained about the undisciplined and irreverent clergy who served as missionaries. Anglican writers generally denied that most of these clergymen acted reprehensibly. However, even they admitted that some individuals needed greater discipline. Of course, in this context, poor discipline became an additional argument to be used in calling for bishops in the colonies. For example, Chandler explained that "the Clergy are independent of each other, and have no Ecclesiastical Superiors to unite or control them" and therefore had to rely entirely on their own self-discipline.<sup>37</sup> He concluded that the presence of a bishop would lead to improved behavior on the part of the bad segment



of the clergy. A letter from Dr. Cutler in Boston argued that even some "sober dissenters do think a resident Bishop would be a blessing in this respect," although he admits that a "much bigger number are ready...to defeat it."<sup>38</sup> The laity would also benefit from a bishop who could confirm them in the colonies, the Anglicans believing in the importance of the office "which is founded on the Example and Authority of Scripture, as well as on the unvaried Practice of the primitive Christians."<sup>39</sup>

The Anglicans simply could not understand on what grounds anyone could object to this proposal. They maintained that bishops were an essential part of the government of their church, and that it ought not be denied them. "If all the religious denominations in America, by the general Constitution of the British Colonies, are to be treated on the Footing of a perfect Equality...then the Church of England is as fully intitled to the compleat Enjoyment of its own Discipline and Institutions, as any other Christians."<sup>40</sup> Both Archbishop Secker and the Bishop of Landaff, Dr. Cresset, maintained that the lack of bishops in the colonies constituted a situation that was unique in Christian history. Cresset went on, referring to potential bishops, asking, "Can two or three persons, restrained to these spiritual functions, be dangerous to any in any matter?"<sup>41</sup> The apparent answer to this question is obviously "no." But some hints of other interests came out at various points. Chandler went on from his plea for equality to argue that, if such equality is found objectionable, the option is clear. "If any one Denomination is intitled to a Superiority above others, as is believed by many; then, the Claim of the Church of England to this Preference, is not to be disputed."<sup>42</sup> Obviously the New England Dissenters believed that they had to dispute such an order of things; their original hostility to the Church had led them to form a new one. Writing in the mid-Nineteenth

Century, Ernest Hawkins noted that the British suffered from "judicial blindness" by not sending bishops to the colonies in an earlier period, because besides its religious benefits, it would "have contributed most powerfully to the maintenance of the connexion between England and her colonies." The State as well as the Church had an obvious interest in the establishment of bishoprics.<sup>43</sup>

Dissenters had many objections to the Anglican defense of the need for bishops, arguing in general that the civil implications of colonial bishops were the loss of colonial liberty and a return to subjection to the Prelates. Specifically ecclesiastical objections took several forms. The Dissenters readily compared the Anglicans to Roman Catholics, arguing that the English church shared more with that body than with the rest of the protestants. The Dissenters argued that their ordination was legitimate, even though their clergy had not been ordained by a bishop. The Dissenting defenders continued by taking the initiative in attacking the missionaries as "High-Church men and Jacobites,"<sup>44</sup> thus stigmatizing them as virtually anti-Christians in the minds of the readers. The colonials also argued that the Church of England should be less concerned with converting congregationalists and more concerned with combating defections to Roman Catholicism.<sup>45</sup> Their failure to deal with this problem was used by the independents as evidence of the tendency of their sympathies. One preacher before the Society bordered on envy of the Roman Church's advantages in missionary work. He noted that they could order their clergy to whatever place they wished; the clergy were not married and so had no family obligations to compete with their work; and they had a bishop in the colonies to direct their efforts. Although he concluded by arguing that the Anglicans only tried to "convince Men by Reason and Truth" of the validity of Anglican religion, one can easily

understand the resentment of his jealousy of Catholic practices among Dissenters.<sup>46</sup>

The Anglicans had justified a colonial bishop partly by arguing that discipline among the clergy in the colonies would improve as a result. Chauncy responded to this view in several ways which were typical of Dissenting opinion. From his point of view, the Church of England had never been properly disciplined by bishops in England. Therefore, he could not see why discipline would improve by having a bishop in the colonies.<sup>47</sup> The alleged undisciplined nature of the Anglican Church had been an essential complaint of the Puritan separatists in England; Chauncy applied this basic belief to the situation at hand. At another point, he stated that, "If their [the clergy's] being under the eye of the omnipresent, omniscient God, will not make them regular and diligent, it is a vain thing to expect that their being under 'the eye of their Bishop' should do it."<sup>48</sup> The surveillance of a bishop did not even begin to approach the sense of divine surveillance felt by Chauncy and his Dissenting brethren. The immediacy of their God was apparently as powerful as that of a human presence watching their every action. Finally, Chauncy objected, "But why should the discipline, directed to be the laws of the Church, be confined to the Clergy [as the plan suggested it should be], while the Laity are left without restraint?"<sup>49</sup> Chauncy, as we have seen, was just as concerned with lay as with clerical discipline.

The Dissenters went beyond these practical arguments, however, and challenged the institution of bishops as such. They argued that there was no historical precedent for bishops exercising powers beyond those of any minister of Christ. Charles Chauncy attacked the Anglican view of the necessity of the episcopal functions of bishops by attempting

to show that Scriptures did not support the Anglican conception of a bishop. Underlying his objections was the basic notion that, "It would be dishonorary to the Bible...to call that an 'appointment of Christ' and an 'essentially necessary' one which is not contained in this sacred volume, and with such clearness and precision, that sober and impartial inquirers may readily perceive it to be there."<sup>50</sup> Chauncy did not deny that the name "Bishop" was applied to certain officers of the early church, "but the proper question is, what is fact with reference to the order of those Bishops, and the powers peculiar to their office, as exercised by them in it?"<sup>51</sup> Noah Hobart responded to this question indirectly when he referred to the "sinful Subjection of the Episcopal Ministers in America, to the English Prelates," sinful in part because bishops were considered an order different from that of priest, even though Christ ordained that all ministers of His church ought to be equal.<sup>52</sup> Chauncy did not take this commandment quite so literally, but he identified only an order of bishops, who were persons "set over the church"; and deacons, who "were set over the services" and had the care of "the poor and the widows."<sup>53</sup> The only option to this view was that there were four distinct groups (apostles, bishops, doctors and ministers), but even this view would not support the "pretence that Bishops are vested with the apostolic office, as their proper and only successors."<sup>54</sup> Having shown at great length the fallacy of Anglican assumptions, Chauncy stated, "The plain truth is, this notion of the right of Bishops to govern and ordain, as being officers in the Church, superior to Presbyters by Divine Appointment was....'first promoted in the Church of England by Archbishop Laud,'"<sup>55</sup> thereby using to advantage a name already associated with the evils of prelacy among Chauncy's readers. The only sources of support for bishops such as those of the Anglican communion were outside

the Bible, which Chauncy dismissed by stating, "He [Christ] has given us the writings of the evangelists and apostles to be the rule of our faith and practice; and it is, we think, so perfect and sufficient an one, that we have no need to have recourse to human, and therefore fallible, writers...."<sup>56</sup> Theologically, then, the Dissenters believed there was no support for bishops exercising powers superior to those of any minister.

The civil implications of resident colonial bishops frightened the Dissenters. Jonathan Mayhew, believing that the Anglican missions only constituted very small groups, argued that the missions "have in short all the appearance of entering wedges" ultimately aimed at "a spiritual siege of our churches, with the hope they will one day submit to an episcopal sovereign."<sup>57</sup> Noah Hobart argued more forcefully that, "At first the Pretence was that your Ministers would always be maintained without any Charge to you. Now they require you do to Part, and in a little Time the whole Burden will be left on your Shoulders. This will undoubtedly be the Case, if ever the Church of England should obtain a legal Establishment here."<sup>58</sup> Once Anglicanism gained a foothold, the Dissenters assumed that it would blossom into a full civil establishment of religion. The first fear, as Hobart expressed, was the expense involved. Charles Chauncy rightly attacked the vagueness in the Chandler proposal regarding the possibility of some general taxation for the support of a bishop and the possibility of some limited civil power for a bishop as manifestations of their fear. The amount of money involved could be significant, if one accepts Carl Bridenbaugh's estimate that supporting a bishop would cost as much as 21,740 pounds sterling annually.<sup>59</sup> Even though this is a highly inflated figure, the entire concept of taxation for the support of bishops was repugnant to the Dissenters. From the Dissenter's viewpoint, the charter had not been intended to send out

missionaries or to lead towards resident bishops, who would work to "re-claim" Dissenters, but rather to convert the truly "heathen" Indians and Negroes. Apthorp spends much of his pamphlet trying to disprove this interpretation of the Charter. His defense of missionary work among the Dissenters aroused a strong attack from Jonathan Mayhew.<sup>60</sup> He argued that the charter's call for "learned and orthodox ministers" and "an orthodox clergy" was intended to mean ministers of any protestant denomination. He defended this view by noting that "orthodox ministers" was used in direct opposition to "Romish priests and jesuits" and was therefore simply used to mean the opposite of the false Catholic clergy. He also believed that the calls to spread "true religion" or "the Christian religion" were the same thing, and were meant to indicate Protestantism. Since the charter was issued by King William, Mayhew argued that this sovereign's religious training would not allow him to view this charter as a condemnation of the non-Anglican protestant churches. Mayhew had to construe the charter in this way in order to defend his own church and protect himself from possible retaliation by the Society or the Church of England. One could easily disagree with all three of these statements in support of his interpretation of the charter. Surely the various protestant bodies did not see each other as equally orthodox groups; a reference to spreading the "true religion" could easily be meant to apply to only one Protestant Church. The importance of William's religious upbringing was more bluntly argued by Noah Hobart, who stated that, "This Party-Design never entred into the Thoughts of that religious Prince who granted this Charter, who was himself bred a Presbyterian, and was an illustrious Defender of religious as well as civil Liberty."<sup>61</sup> One could challenge this view by arguing that William was ready to assure the Anglican leaders of his devotion to England and her established religion by authorizing the

Anglican missionary society. Nevertheless, the assumed intent of the charter was that it called on missionaries to minister primarily to the heathen Indians and Negroes. Apthorp was hitting at a sensitive spot in Dissenting defenses.

But as was clear from the earlier description of Anglican missionary work, these groups did not receive priority attention. Instead, the Anglicans ministered to members of their own church long without clergy. But they also attacked the Dissenting Church. John Beach claimed that the "presbyterian and independent" ministers did not have "authority from Christ by a Succession" since their ordination was either at the hands of a layman or a priest, but not through the proper channel, a bishop.<sup>62</sup> Noah Hobart claimed that "itinerant" SPG missionaries preached "the doctrine that our Ministers and Churches are neither Ministers nor Churches of Christ."<sup>63</sup> Beach also objected that although Anglican discipline needed improvement, the independents lacked almost all control over their churches. "For when the highest ecclesiastical Court...have deposed a Minister, or excommunicated a Number of Laymen...they value it not a Rush; for if the silenced Minister can but keep in with his People, he will keep his Station, preach, and administer the Sacraments, in Defiance of your Sentence."<sup>64</sup> Obviously, the Anglican missionaries did not accept the theological beliefs which supported Dissenting ordination and other Church practices. The Independent Churches had intentionally divided from Anglicanism, despite Hobart's denial "that the Founders of our Churches set up schismatical Separations in England, and afterward crossed the Atlantic to establish and perpetuate their Schism."<sup>65</sup> The attempt to reunite these two religious camps was a task that required compromises which neither side was willing to make. Each saw the other as schismatical with relation to the "true" Christian religion. Mayhew,

however, argued that the Dissenters were willing to tolerate religious diversity. Those "conscientious people" who believed in episcopal religion, "even tho' we [Dissenters] may think it considerably less protestant and scriptural than our own," were free to do so since "the government here neither pretends nor desires to deprive them of their religious liberty."<sup>66</sup> The Anglicans claimed that this was all they asked; the Dissenters believed that Anglican missions to New England were intended for other purposes.

"Why then must such Numbers of Missionaries be sent hither, where there are so many Places truly in the Condition [of being 'abandoned to Atheism and Infidelity'] mentioned in the Society's Charter, of whom little or no Care is taken?"<sup>67</sup> Hobart was not alone in asking that question. Mayhew, believing that New England's colonies were among those "whose religious state is such, as renders them improper objects of this charity," argued that missions in New England constituted a "misapplication" of their efforts "to the neglect, prejudice and injury of other colonies, the Negroes and Indians, who were unquestionably proper objects of their charity."<sup>68</sup> In response to Anglican objections that the Indians had first to be civilized and then converted, Charles Chauncy stated, "The design of the religion of Jesus is to humanize, as well as christianize the soul...and this will be it's effect in whomsoever it is really planted."<sup>69</sup> The colonial Dissenters believed that Anglican failures in ministering to the truly "heathen" people in America, and their interpretation of the charter to support their emphasis on other work, were signs of their true goal: to reclaim the colonies to the imperial designs of Great Britain and to squash the liberties of New England. This expectation of renewed political control was at the base of Dissenting opposition to Anglican missionary work of any sort. To them, the greatest threat was



the loss of political and civil liberties under bishops. In refuting Thomas Chandler's belief that the Anglicans were being uniquely persecuted by the Dissenters' denial of their desire for a bishop, Charles Chauncy revealed a deep fear. "Did he never hear of the infinitely more distressed condition of great numbers that were deprived, fined, imprisoned...in the days of those hard-hearted Arch-Bishops Parker, Bancroft, Whitegift, and Laud?"

The essential issue at stake in these arguments can be described very broadly as the confrontation between a growing colonial identity and the subordination of the American colonies to England. A century of neglect by an England preoccupied with other affairs allowed the colonies to begin developing a new social, religious, and to some extent economic and political, order which was more suited to their tastes and needs. In the mid-Eighteenth Century, the New England colonies were in the midst of this major transition. The earlier development of the Massachusetts Bay Colony had resulted in religiously unified society, organized in a more radically protestant way than Anglicanism. The new order had depended on the Scriptures for its support, to the exclusion of other beliefs based on the traditions of the historic church. It was formed by relatively independent congregations, membership in which determined one's political franchise. Rather than being governed by a bishop, the Congregational establishment had a conciliar-hierarchical form, which ideally allowed for better representation for the laymen of the church. Inevitably, disagreements had arisen, but they had been solved—within the existing order—to the satisfaction of the parties involved. In general, the civil and religious powers were closely interrelated, to their mutual benefit.

But this idyllic situation began to disintegrate with the challenges

of Roger Williams and Ann Hutchinson. When they each led their followers into new and independent settlements, the beginnings of real division had occurred. The authority of the existing powers was challenged both by new dissident groups among the Puritans and by the increasing immigration of non-Puritan people and ideas. The established powers, seeing the deterioration of their position, became increasingly defensive and increasingly rigid in maintaining the old orthodoxy.

By the Eighteenth Century, however, these powers realized it was necessary to compromise with the new forces in order to maintain internal harmony and peace. New England was in the midst of a transition from a religiously unified society to a conglomerate of many different religious groups. There were some Quakers proclaiming the inner light of conscience; Baptists emphasizing the birth of water and the Spirit; many small sects that had divided off from the New England establishment; even individuals who were simply not concerned about religious beliefs. The response to this change was the increasing separation of the powers exercised by ecclesiastical and civil leaders. One's religious tax would now be directed to other groups besides the Congregational clergy upon request; laws against ministers of other religious bodies were enforced less often and eventually abandoned. The Puritan commonwealth had all but disappeared.

The increasing number of Anglican clergy in this period of transition was a part of the general movement away from religious unity. But Anglicanism was different from the other groups challenging the Congregationalists. It was closer to Catholicism rather than farther removed from it; it was clearly associated with England and its work was directed by the ecclesiastical authorities at home; it was the church which the Puritans had rejected in forming their new establishment. As the number

of Anglican clergy increased, the Independents grew increasingly concerned about their purpose. The call for a resident bishop alarmed them. In the eyes of the New Englanders, a bishop represented a new attempt at a return to religious unity. But this would be a unity enforced by powers in the mother country against the will of the colonial residents. Some even believed that it would coerce them to join the forces of evil against the "true" church. They could only see the purpose of enforced unification with the Church of England in imperial terms. It would be the first step in the process of limiting their political and economic independence. It would force them into a closer relationship with England, a tendency counter to the trend away from their homeland of the first century of New England's history.

The colonials were wrong in accepting the idea that a bishop represented a unified religious state; England had also lost her religious unity. But they were not wrong in believing that the mother country was anxious to tie the colonies into an imperial economic arrangement, primarily for the benefit of England (See Appendix E). New England was the most important area in the colonies economically. It included tradesmen of all sorts and producers of non-agricultural materials. It was the distribution center for large amounts of agricultural materials because it was the center of American shipbuilding. From England's point of view, a bishop would be a valuable force in this context, and a source of first-hand information about what was occurring in the colonies. Of course, a bishop would also strengthen the Anglican Church's position in relation to other denominations. The innocent players in this essentially imperial drama were the SPG missionaries sent into eighteenth-century New England. The membership of the Society at home had both political and ecclesiastical goals in mind for the colonies; but the missionaries were

more interested in increasing their congregations and combating the spiritual evils they saw in the Congregational Churches than in demanding intense political obedience to England. Some of them could not take the difficulties of the missionary life; some took advantage of the fact that they were only truly responsible to themselves; but they were generally devoted clergymen who believed that they were spreading the true religion. When they joined in the call for a resident bishop, they wanted a spiritual leader, and they did not believe that the mother country desired a great deal more than that.

A bishop was not actually sent into the colonies until they became independent states and part of a new, uncertain union, the United States. The first bishop, Samuel Seabury, was not consecrated in England but in Aberdeen, Scotland. The Episcopal Church in America was fully tolerated only when its ties with England were purely ecclesiastical, free from any civil implications. As a result of the Revolution, the Anglican churches were in extremely poor condition, and the new American form of the Episcopal Church only regained its position slowly.

Politically, the SPG efforts succeeded only in being among those events and institutions which led the American colonists to revolution. But religiously, the Society's missionaries were defamed with little apparent cause by Independent clergy who felt threatened by their own decreasing power and the effects of Anglican theology on many colonists. The missionaries failed to gain the respect of Dissenting clergy not because of poor or improper ministries, but because the missionaries were the first and most apparent evidence of a new threat to colonial independence from England.

It is within this tense atmosphere that we must understand East Apthorp's pamphlet. What might have been part of common pamphlet warfare in the American colonies instead set off a personal, almost vindictive pamphlet battle. What was it about East Apthorp and his writing which led to such reactions?

To begin with, East Apthorp was different from other missionaries in two important respects: wealth and homeland. He was the son of Charles Apthorp, one of the wealthiest merchants in Boston, and also an Anglican. Born in 1733, he entered Boston Latin School in 1747, leaving to matriculate at Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1751. He received his bachelor's degree in 1755, receiving the Chancellor's Prize for classical learning, a skill he made good use of in his writings. He completed the Master's degree in 1758, winning Latin Dissertation Prizes twice, and was also ordained in the Church of England during his time at Cambridge.

During East's youth in Boston, his family was part of the political opposition to Jonathan Belcher, the colonial governor from 1730 to 1741. Along with William Bollan, Robert Auchmuty, and William Shirley, Charles Apthorp was a member of King's Chapel, the Anglican Church in Boston, and all of them objected to Governor Belcher. "They disliked particularly the favoritism Belcher showed the Quakers, when their own church, the established church in England, labored under annoying restrictions that were mitigated only by expensive litigation."<sup>70</sup> Belcher's position had weakened by 1741, and, using business connections in England, Charles Apthorp managed to have William Shirley appointed governor. New England Congregationalists were horrified to see Shirley become governor, but

the mercantile class, especially the Anglicans, were delighted. Apthorp became a close advisor to Governor Shirley, and profited handsomely.<sup>71</sup>

When Charles Apthorp died in 1758, he left a large estate. In 1759, when East got word of his father's death and returned home, he inherited shares worth 600 pounds, consisting of three sections of land in Milton, totaling 42 acres and including two houses and a barn. "it is difficult to say what additional portion of his father's personal estate East received, but it must have been sizeable in light of his later expenditures in Cambridge."<sup>72</sup>

In April of that same year, a group of merchants including Charles Apthorp's friends, applied to the SPG for a missionary to serve Cambridge, the petition having the endorsements of Governor Shirley and Henry Caner, the rector of King's Chapel. Caner noted that a new church in Cambridge would save many worshippers a ten-mile trip to the Boston church, and would provide an Anglican center of worship for students attending Harvard College.<sup>73</sup> It is surprising that Caner was so candid about the purposes for a Cambridge mission. One of the issues raised repeatedly about SPG missions in settled New England communities was precisely the threat of Anglican conversions within the intellectual institutions. As we have seen, Yale underwent major changes in the 1720's; Harvard, the citadel of Congregationalism and the center of the dominant religious ideas of the colony, was of even greater concern to Congregationalist Bostonians. An Anglican presence and outreach to the Harvard community was a threat of the first magnitude.

The Society responded favorably to the petition on November 14, 1759, and the building of the church was begun. The obvious candidate for the post of missionary was East Apthorp, but he almost decided to accept instead the vice-presidency of the newly-formed King's College in New York.

Samuel Johnson, the president of King's, believed Apthorp was ideally suited to that job because of his classical education. After some hesitation, Apthorp accepted the Cambridge post, seeing it as a significant challenge.

The church did not grow as rapidly as was hoped, and as late as 1764 was still ridiculed in the Boston Gazette (April 30, 1764).<sup>74</sup> But of more concern to Apthorp was the growing belief that the Church of England intended to send a bishop to the colonies, specifically to New England. As we have seen, this was not a new fear, but Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of Boston's West Church, was convinced by 1762 that the time was to be soon, and that Thomas Secker, the Archbishop of Canterbury and president of the SPG, was behind it. Apthorp dedicated the 1763 pamphlet to Secker, perhaps as a result of Mayhew's accusation.

Apthorp was finally spurred to begin writing it when an obituary of the Reverend Ebenezer Miller, SPG missionary in Braintree, sarcastically described Miller's work. The obituary appeared in the Boston Gazette on February 21, 1763, and Apthorp began his work in defense of SPG work in New England's settled towns, arguing that the Society's Charter specifically justified sending missionaries to the colonial communities.

Apthorp chose to use the pamphlet form, and the way in which he puts forward his position is affected by that structure. Bernard Bailyn has argued persuasively in his volume Pamphlets of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1965) that the pamphlet form was especially suited to the political goals of the American colonists in the mid-Eighteenth Century because of its flexibility and its easy distribution once written. The civil arguments used by the colonists, however, had their basis in something deeper, the Puritan religious tradition. In addition to drawing analogies between their cause and that of clas-

sical antiquity and English common law, the colonists used "...political and social theories of New England Puritanism, and particularly from the ideas associated with covenant theology. For the elaborate system of thought erected by the first leaders of settlement in New England had been consolidated and amplified by a succession of writers in the course of the Seventeenth Century, channeled into the main stream of eighteenth-century political and social thinking by a generation of enlightened preachers, and softened in its denominational rigor by many hands until it could be received, with minor variations, by almost the entire spectrum of American Protestantism.<sup>75</sup>

By using this form, Apthorp was getting himself embroiled not in a rarified discussion of the legality of the SPG charter, or the spiritual benefits of Anglican clergymen in New England, but rather in a politico-theological battle with its own rules. He opened himself to criticism on many more levels than he might have supposed, and the immediate and long-term reactions to his pamphlet which have been discussed above reveal just how powerful a combination that was. Although the argument presents itself in a clear and rational way, the responses were not similarly logical arguments. Mayhew and many others took to heart a few statements in Apthorp's pamphlet, magnified these to a grand scale, drew inferences from them and finally set about to prove that a conspiracy existed involving the Church of England and the civil authority in a plot to overthrow the independent charter of Massachusetts. Apthorp must have been aware of the fact that a pamphlet bearing his name would undergo various kinds of interpretation, but perhaps even he was surprised at the strong and voluminous response his short document aroused.

That such inferences were drawn from it does not, however, absolve Apthorp of his responsibility for some statements in the pamphlet which



are unnecessarily pointed. For example, the quotation from Eusebius on the title page communicates two messages to the reader. The first is simply Apthorp's desire to impress the reader with his classical knowledge. This desire to impress can be seen in the two other classical references to Virgil, especially since Apthorp gives only a vague note of their sources, thereby making it difficult to check on the material in its original context, and also thereby assuming that everyone ought to know where to find his favorite quotations. No doubt the tone conveyed in this way worked against his purposes.

The second issue is the content of these quotations. The reference to Eusebius casts the unconvinced reader in the role of being "empty and mendacious" or "false." The quotation from Virgil (p. 9) presents Apthorp as one stamping out iniquity, and punishing those who deserve it. Finally, the quotation pieced together from the Eclogues glories in the arrival of Anglicanism in terms befitting the kingdom of God breaking into history. These bald statements of superiority in matters of faith no doubt spurred Jonathan Mayhew and others to respond with equal conviction of their own superiority. It is important to note that Apthorp weakens his argument by taking these opportunities to put the reader on the defensive. Comparing the Congregationalists to "Popery and Mohomiticism" (p. 14), or characterizing the colonial religious life as "savage and gloomy," its doctrines as "speculative," and its religion in general of being formed of "fanaticism, hypocrisy, and persecution," (p. 17) proved a poor way of swaying any open minds.

All this is not to say that Anglicans were being treated equitably in colonial New England. They were taxed for the support of Congregationalism for years after other Christian groups were relieved of that burden (see Appendix F), and one imagines that they were suspected of

working for the destruction of colonial New England society by desiring the introduction of a resident bishop. As the Apthorp family attests, Anglicans in New England were often wealthier than others and part of the mercantile establishment which represented the interests of the crown. They were an easy target for those unhappy with the demands of England, even though the presence of a resident business elite was far better than absentee economic control from England. A pamphlet like Apthorp's in this context became a scapegoat for all the frustrations of a New England Congregational elite witnessing the weakening of its control on the colony. The wistfully-remembered beacon on a hill was becoming a polyglot of interest groups vying for power. And the most distrusted new interest group of all were wealthy Anglican merchants.

East Apthorp's personal lifestyle contributed to this image of the wealthy Anglican mercantile class. He built a home which has survived to our age and which was the subject of a book in 1960 because of its interest to historians of architecture. At the time it was built, however, it was seen as a virtual palace among the more humble homes which then made up Cambridge. That a missionary should inhabit such a palatial home, claim to be bringing the true faith to Englishmen in the heart of Congregationalism, and then publish a pamphlet calmly defending Anglican missionary work on grounds that King William, the historical friend of the Protestants, intended to authorize the sending of exclusively Anglican clergy to the colonies—well, that was just more than the long-resident Congregational clergy were prepared to endure. Some of them, led by Mayhew, decided that this home was really being built to house the first Anglican bishop to be resident in New England. Although it appears that such an intention was never seriously entertained in England, the possibility confirmed a continual unspoken fear shared by most of

the people of New England—that is, that England would resort to coercion in religion as it was then attempting to do in economic affairs. Anger and fear which were to lead to revolution was well underway by 1736, and Apthorp found his work caught up in the larger controversies of the day.

For Apthorp, a principle worth defending was at stake. As we have seen, his use of classical material and pointed remarks about the colonists detracted from the basic issue and allowed subsequent writers to ignore his central point in dwelling on his offensive remarks. One writer has put the fundamental issue clearly:

Behind all the ecclesiastical manipulation, beneath all the legalistic forensics, the issue was the question of control. East Apthorp intended that the Society should have the authority to establish a mission in any American town, with or without an adequate number of churches of other denominations. Jonathan Mayhew, the resourceful leader of the Apthorp opposition, intended that it should not. Apthorp's problem was to talk of Episcopal jurisdiction firmly enough to frighten the Mayhew circle,<sup>76</sup> but gently enough not to alienate the populace.

The result of this dual effort to conciliate and to confront was a fundamentally confused tone in the pamphlet which led to more difficulties rather than simply clarifying facts about Anglican missionary work. It is this confusion in tone and the volatile situation in the society at large in New England which help to explain why this apparently simple and straightforward pamphlet produced such controversy. It is ironic that the Anglican Church could only be accepted when it became a part of the new United States of America as the Episcopal Church, fashioned with a governing structure much like that of the new country.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Charter of the Society is available in several places, including Ernest Hawkins, Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England (London, 1845), Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>Classified Digest of the SPG (Westminster, 1893), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>The Request of the Society...concerning fit Ministers to be sent Abroad, 1702, published as a public notice.

<sup>4</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Cresset, Bishop of Landaff (Westminster, 1753), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry (Westminster, 1756), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Drummond, Bishop of St. Asaph (Westminster, 1754), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Thomas, Bishop of Peterborough (Westminster, 1750), p. 24.

<sup>8</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Johnson, Bishop of Gloucester (Westminster, 1758), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>H. W. T., The Spiritual Expansion of the Empire (London, 1900), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Classified Digest, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup>East Apthorp, Considerations on the Institution and Conduct of the Society (Boston, 1763), pp. 21-2.

<sup>12</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester (Westminster, 1766), p. 11.

<sup>13</sup>Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre (New York, 1962), pp. 68-9.

<sup>14</sup>John Beach, Expostulations...the real advantages of conforming (New York, 1763), p. 9.

<sup>15</sup>H. W. T., The Spiritual Expansion of the Empire (London, 1900), p. 10.

<sup>16</sup>Arthur Lyon Cross, Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies, (New York, 1902), p. 36.

- <sup>17</sup>Jonathan Mayhew, Observations on...the SPG (Boston, 1763), p. 117.
- <sup>18</sup>Secker, Answer, (London, 1764), pp. 13-5.
- <sup>19</sup>Burr, The Story of the Diocese of Connecticut (Hartford, 1962), p. 41.
- <sup>20</sup>Beach, A Calm Vindication (Boston, 1749), pp. 3-4.
- <sup>21</sup>John Beach, letter to the Society in April, 1765, quoted in Hawkins, Historical Notices, p. 209.
- <sup>22</sup>Hawkins, Historical Notices, p. 387.
- <sup>23</sup>Reverend J. Beach to the Society, 1743, in Classified Digest of the Records of the Society...1701-1892 (London, 1893), p. 45.
- <sup>24</sup>Maud O'Neil, "A Struggle for Religious Liberty: An Analysis of the Work of the SPG in Connecticut," in Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church (XX(1951)), p. 174.
- <sup>25</sup>Burr, Diocese of Connecticut, p. 45.
- <sup>26</sup>An Abstract, 1756, pp. 43-9.
- <sup>27</sup>Arthur Lyon Cross, The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies (New York, 1902), p. 19.
- <sup>28</sup>Bridenbaugh, Mitre, p. 91.
- <sup>29</sup>O'Neil, "Matthew Graves," in McCullough, Humanitarianism, pp. 131-2.
- <sup>30</sup>Bridenbaugh, Mitre, pp. 93-5.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-8
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 215-6.
- <sup>33</sup>Thomas Chandler, An Appeal to the Public (New York, 1767), p. 79.
- <sup>34</sup>Secker, Answer, p. 60.
- <sup>35</sup>Chandler, Appeal to the Public, pp. 100-4.
- <sup>36</sup>Hawkins, Historical Notices, pp. 194-5.
- <sup>37</sup>Chandler, Appeal to the Public, p. 29.
- <sup>38</sup>Timothy Cutler to the Society, letter from Boston, June 26, 1749, in Hawkins, Historical Notices, p. 185.
- <sup>39</sup>Chandler, Appeal to the Public, p. 19.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 117.
- <sup>41</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Ewer, Bishop of Landaff (Westminster, 1767), pp. 22-3.

- <sup>42</sup>Chandler, Appeal to the Public, p. 117.
- <sup>43</sup>Hawkins, Historical Notices, p. 212.
- <sup>44</sup>Bridenbaugh, Mitre, pp. 304-5.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 241-2.
- <sup>46</sup>A Sermon, Preached...by Dr. Benson, Bishop of Glocester (Westminster, 1739), pp. 26-7.
- <sup>47</sup>Charles Chauncy, The Appeal (Boston, 1768), pp. 76-7.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-9.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 69.
- <sup>50</sup>Charles Chauncy, A Compleat View of Episcopacy (Boston, 1771), p. 11.
- <sup>51</sup>Chauncy, Compleat View, pp. xiii-xiv.
- <sup>52</sup>Noah Hobart, Serious Address (Boston, 1748), pp. 79-81.
- <sup>53</sup>Chauncy, Compleat View, p. 55.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 59.
- <sup>55</sup>Chauncy, The Appeal, pp. 12-3.
- <sup>56</sup>Chauncy, Compleat View, p. iii.
- <sup>57</sup>Mayhew, Observations, p. 57.
- <sup>58</sup>Hobart, Serious Address, p. 52.
- <sup>59</sup>Bridenbaugh, Mitre, pp. 304-5.
- <sup>60</sup>Mayhew, Observations, pp. 21-2.
- <sup>61</sup>Hobart, Serious Address, p. 127.
- <sup>62</sup>Beach, Calm Vindication, p. 12.
- <sup>63</sup>Hobart, Serious Address, p. 72.
- <sup>64</sup>Beach, Calm Vindication, p. 37.
- <sup>65</sup>Hobart, Serious Address, pp. 32-3.
- <sup>66</sup>Mayhew, Observations, pp. 80-1.
- <sup>67</sup>Hobart, Serious Address, p. 53.
- <sup>68</sup>Mayhew, Observations, p. 13.
- <sup>69</sup>Chauncy, The Appeal, p. 126.

<sup>70</sup>Wendell Garrett, Apthorp House (Cambridge, 1960), p. 4.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>75</sup>Bernard Bailyn, Pamphlets of the American Revolution (Cambridge, 1965), p. 27.

<sup>76</sup>Garrett, Apthorp House, p. 13.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The best primary materials on the SPG are to a great extent sermons, data and commentaries released through the Society's office. Much of this material is therefore intended to convince the reader of the success and good intentions of the Society. Several such works are available at the Library of the Episcopal Divinity School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They include the Classified Digest of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1892 (London, 1893, David Humphreys, An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society (London, 1730), C. F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG: An Historical Account, 2 volumes (Westminster, 1901), and H. W. T., The Spiritual Expansion of the Empire (London, 1900). The annual sermons and summaries of letters are available in a multi-volumed set of works named Sermons and Abstracts of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They provide sources of information about the successes the Society believed it was having and their biases regarding certain sorts of missionary work. Particularly useful sermons include those of: The Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. Benson, in 1739; the Dean of Lincoln, The Reverend Dr. George, in 1748; the Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Drummond, in 1754; the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Hayter, in 1755; the Bishop of St. David's, Dr. Ellis, in 1759; and the Bishop of Landaff, Dr. Ewer, in 1767. Another work (not printed by the Society) which summarizes much of the missionaries' letters up to the mid-Nineteenth Century is Ernest Hawkins, Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England in the North



American Colonies (London, 1845).

The Library of the General Theological Seminary in New York City provides a microfilmed collection of letters from missionaries in Connecticut to the Society in London in the period from 1734-1790. The microfilm (#136) was made from original manuscripts of the letters and it is therefore somewhat difficult to read. The letters provide an excellent opportunity to join the missionaries in viewing the world of colonial New England. Along with these letters, the two sets of instructions to the missionaries, issued in 1753 and 1756, help one understand the pressures on the missionaries from the society's leadership.

The call for a bishop led to a large number of pamphlets for and against the proposal. Many of these works are available at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Houghton Library of Harvard University. In addition to East Apthorp's Considerations on the Institution and Conduct of the SPG (Boston, 1763), John Beach, Expostulation, ... The real advantages which Ministers and People may enjoy by conforming (New York, 1763) and A Calm Vindication of the Professors of the Church of England (Boston, 1749), Thomas B. Chandler, An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Church of England in America (New York, 1767), and Thomas Secker, An Answer to Dr. Mayhew's Observations on the Charter and Conduct of the SPG (London, 1764) all argue in favor of the Anglican views. Important works against the proposal for a bishop in the colonies include Charles Chauncy, A Compleat View of Episcopacy, as Exhibited from the Fathers of the Christian Church (Boston, 1771) and An Appeal to the Public Answered (Boston, 1768), Noah Hobart, A Serious Address to Members of the Episcopal Separation in New England (Boston, 1748), and Jonathan Mayhew, Observations on the Charter and Conduct of the SPG (Boston, 1763).

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this essay are included in the complete alphabetical listing that follows.

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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE  
INSTITUTION and CONDUCT  
OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION  
OF THE  
GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

1732-1811  
By *EAST APTHORP*, M. A.

MISSIONARY AT CAMBRIDGE.

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Cum res *illi* suas, quibus utique notiores eae sunt, accurate planeque doceant; *hi* vero quosdam tantum *iis* de rebus suspiciones, quas minime perspectas habent, in absurdas ac futiles disputationum ineptias conferant: *utris* obsecro fidem habendam esse ratio suadeat? immo, indignum certe fuerit, vel hoc querere. Vanos continuo ac mendaces esse, qui eas respuunt, necesse est.

EUSEB. Præp. Evang. l. III. c. 15. ex  
vers. Vigeri.

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BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:

Printed by GREEN & RUSSELL, in Queen-Street,  
and THOMAS & JOHN FLEET, in Cornhill.

MDCCCLXIII.

CONSIDERATIONS  
on the  
INSTITUTION AND CONDUCT  
of the  
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts  
by  
East Apthorp, M.A.  
Missionary at Cambridge

Since they teach plainly and with care those things of his—according to which these things are in any case spurious—then indeed, since those things concern matters of suspicion which they have but minimally examined, they are uselessly debating absurd and futile arguments. I entreat you, which of these two reasons persuades (one) to have faith? Nay, it were even unworthy to look for (an answer to) this. I continue, that they who would spurn these things are of necessity empty and mendacious.

Eusebius, Preparation of the  
Gospel, book 3, chapter 15\*

Boston, New-England  
Printed by Green and Russell, in Queen Street  
and Thomas and John Fleet, in Cornhill,  
1763

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\* Literal translation of the Latin kindly made by Ms. Angela Askew of the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass. The original Greek text with an English translation directly from the Greek is on the following page.

Original Greek text of Eusebius (title page):#

ποιητῶν γὰρ οὖν, ὡς φασι, μύθους περὶ θεῶν πλαττομένων,  
φιλοσόφων δὲ φυσιολογούντων· ἤρην δὴ πού τινας τῶν μὲν  
καταφρονεῖν, τοὺς δὲ θαυμάζειν ὡς φιλοσόφους, καὶ μᾶλλον  
τῶν ποιητικῶν λόγων, τὰς τῶν κρειττόνων ἐνδέχουσαι,  
πειθολογίας. θεῶν δ' αὖ πάλιν καὶ φιλοσόφων εἰς ἀμύχαν  
κατιόντων, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐπὶ χρησμοῖς τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοῦς,  
ὡς ἂν μᾶλλον εἰδέτιν, ἀκριβῶς, διδάσκοντων, τῶν  
δὲ εἰς ἀσχημώτους καὶ ἀκαταδείκτους εὐρεσιλογίας  
τὰς περὶ ὧν μὴ ἴσασιν ὑπανοίως περιτρεπόντων.  
τίσιν εἰρή λόγος πείθεσθαι; ἢ τοῦτο οὐδὲ ἐρωτᾶν  
ἔδει; εἰ δὲ οὖν ἀληθεύουσιν οἱ θεοὶ κυροῦντες τὰς περὶ  
αὐτῶν ἀνθρωποπαθείας, ψευδεῖς ἂν εἴεν οἱ ἀθετοῦντες αὐτάς  
εἰ δὲ τῶν φιλοσόφων ἀληθεῖς αἱ φυσιολογίαι, ψευδεῖς ἂν γέναιντο αἱ  
τῶν θεῶν κερτυρία. Ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς, εἰποι τις, ὁ ἀπέλλων ἔφη πού  
ἐν χρησμοῖς ἐρωτηθεὶς περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅστις εἴη.

English translation of the Greek:%

(The full passage is included, with the precise section used on the title page underlined.)

When poets, therefore, as they say, invent legends concerning the gods, while philosophers give physical explanations, we ought, I suppose, rightly to despise the former, and admire the latter as philosophers, and to accept the persuasive arguments of this better class rather than the triflings of the poets. But when on the other hand gods and philosophers enter into competition and the former, as likely to know best, state exactly the facts concerning themselves in their oracles, while the latter twist their guesses about things which they do not know into discordant and undemonstrable subtleties, which does reason persuade us to believe? Or rather is this not even worth asking? If therefore the gods are to speak true in certifying the human passions attributed to them, they who set these aside must be false; but if the physical explanations of the philosophers are true, the testimonies of the gods must be false.

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# Eusebius Pamphili, Praeparatio Evangelica, Lib. III, chapter XV, Migne, Preparation of the Gospel, 21:23.

% H. Gifford, Preparation of the Gospel (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 223.

## Editorial Policies

I have endeavoured to reproduce the original in most respects. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and Apthorp's system of keying in differ in some respects from current usage, but they have been retained since no lack of clarity results from their use. Apthorp often leaves material out of quotations and takes short statements from several sources, squeezing them together into a single statement. I have indicated by my numerical footnotes where this has taken place, and the original material in its larger context is included in an appendix.

Each page of the original is given one page in this edition, the original page number appearing at the top, followed by the text, Apthorp's notes, and my own editorial notes. I have retained Apthorp's method of keying in; my own notes are in serial order.

Throughout the notes, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" is listed as SPGFP.



To his GRACE  
THOMAS Lord Archbishop  
of Canterbury  
President.

and  
To the venerable Society  
for the  
PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL  
in  
FOREIGN PARTS,

THESE CONSIDERATIONS  
are humbly submitted,  
in appeal to their judgment and decision,  
by their dutiful missionary

E. APTHORP.

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CONSIDERATIONS, etc.

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Whether the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts conform to the design of their incorporation, by maintaining episcopal churches in the settled Towns and Villages of North-America: or whether they have not misapplied a fund originally limited to the conversion of Heathens: is a question so interesting to the Missionaries and their congregations, that the impartial Public will not be unfavourable to an attempt to determine it, once for all, by authentic vouchers. Should this supposed misapplication evidently appear; every honest Missionary must be anxious of the propriety and right application of his

services as a minister of the Gospel. But if from the whole history and proceedings of the Society it shall appear, that their direct and immediate object is the propagation of the Gospel in our Colonies and Plantations: the Society will be vindicated from a popular objection; and the Missionaries will be entitled to that candid opinion and fair acceptance of their labours, which is due to their integrity and diligence.

Whatever shall be advanced in these papers is far from the least intention of offence or controversy. The writer sincerely honours Virtue in whomsoever; and is persuaded, that Good Men of all communions "coöperate in promoting the end of Christianity. The proposed vindication is designed to convince the Candid. To confute the obstinate, and silence the malicious, is not in the power of Reason. Yet to calumniate the living, and insult the dead, whose intentions can only be scrutinized at the supreme tribunal, is an outrage that deserves the public detestation; and in a late instance,

etsi nullum memorabile nomen—

—nec habet victoria laudem:

Extinxisse neses tamen, et sumpsisse merentis

Laudabor poenas—<sup>1</sup>

All the proceedings and the whole history of the Society invariably represent it, as first intended to benefit the English subjects; and then, as an opening should be made, the Africans and Indians.

The Charter, granted by King William III in MDCCI. thus expresses the design of their incorporation. "Whereas, in many of the English plantations, colonies, and factories beyond the seas, the provision for Ministers is very mean; and many others of the said Colonies are wholly destitute and unprovided of a maintenance for Ministers and the public worship of God: and, for lack of support and maintenance for learned and orthodox ministers,<sup>2</sup> to instruct our loving SUBJECTS in the principles of true Religion, many of our said subjects do want the administration of God's word and sacraments: We think it our duty to promote the glory of God, by the Instruction

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<sup>1</sup>Virgil, Aeneid, Book II, pp. 583-586. Reference is to Helen. "For although to kill a woman earns one No fame, and victory over a female wins no decorations, I shall be praised for stamping out an iniquity, punishing One who so richly deserves it." Tr. is C. Day Lewis, The Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil (London, Oxford University Press, 1966). The Quotation was identified by Dr. Stanley Marrow of the Weston School of Theology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup>This is sufficiently ambiguous that much debate centered on its correct interpretation. Apthorp takes it to mean clergy of the Church of England and no other Protestant communion.

of our People in the Christian Religion: and that it will be highly conducive for accomplishing those ends, that a sufficient maintenance be provided for an orthodox clergy TO LIVE AMONGST THEM: and that such other provision be made as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel in those parts. —We have, for the considerations AFORESAID, and for the better and more orderly carrying on the said charitable purposes, constituted and appointed a Society—the major part of whose members present at certain meetings, may consult, determine, and make ANY CONSTITUTIONS, LAWS, AND STATUTES WHATSOEVER, which to them shall seem reasonable, profitable or requisite, for the good estate, rule, order, and government of the said corporation, and the more effectual promoting their charitable design."<sup>3</sup>

From these paragraphs we may deduce the following certain conclusions. 1. That the primary intention of this Society was, to maintain a public Religion in the English Colonies, among the natural subjects<sup>4</sup> of Great-Britain; and to provide a maintenance for an orthodox

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<sup>3</sup>This quotation is a conflation of several provisions of the actual Charter; the whole Charter is available in several places, including Ernest Hawkins, Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England (London, 1845), Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup>An unfortunate and revealing reference to the colonists who, by 1763, did not see themselves as "natural" subjects of Great Britain.

clergy; which (as the charter was obtained by the members of the church of England) must, in all reasonable constructions, mean a clergy of their own church. The reason of the support of that clergy, is for the instruction of our own people in the Christian Religion, and that they may live amongst them as their settled and resident Ministers. This is the primary and main intention of incorporating that Society: viz. the maintaining Episcopal Ministers in the colonies, for the support of public worship among the English subjects in our own Provinces, in the most populous and settled parts of the continent where they may be most useful.

2. Their secondary design is expressed in very large and indefinite terms: "that such other provision may be made, as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel in those parts:" that is, in any of the English colonies or plantations, with no particular restrictions to the Indians of this continent, who are not once mentioned in the whole Charter: which only implies, that the Society should discretionally improve all favourable opportunities of disseminating the Gospel among such Heathens as could be induced to

receive it. Thus far it appears, "that the first and principal end of this corporation is, not to plant Christianity among Heathens, but to restore or preserve it among Christians: and that the converting Heathens is a secondary incidental point. For as our colonies are settled in heathen countries; it is not likely, that if we can preserve Religion among our own people, many of the Heathens will be the better for it."\*

3. It is observable, that a large discretionary power is left to the Society, to regulate their institution, and even occasionally to make alterations in it, in such a manner as to render it most beneficial to Religion, whether in our colonies, or among the bordering nations. For this purpose, they and their successors for ever are impowered to make any laws or constitutions that shall seem reasonable, profitable, or requisite for the good estate and government of the Society, and the effectual promoting its charitable design. Thus, with an evidence beyond exception, it appears that their conduct, in placing Churches among us, is in all respects conformable to their institution; and to any who cries out on imaginary

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\*Dr. Stebbing's Serm, 1742, p. 18 [A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, Friday, February 19, 1741/2, by Henry Stebbing, Chaplain to His Majesty, and Chancellor of Sarum (London, 1742). The full context of this quotation, which is an imprecise reduction of a much longer statement, can be found in Appendix A.]

abuses or misapplications, the Society may reply, like the wife and good householder whose Stewards they are, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"<sup>5</sup>

A few reflections will show the use of this appeal to the first constitution of the Society.

In the first place, it argues great ignorance, or something worse, to misrepresent them as deserting their plan and institution, by settling Episcopal Churches in the English governments. By maintaining such Churches and their resident Ministers in the very heart and bosom of our Colonies, in the most settled Provinces and most populous Towns;<sup>6</sup> they keep to the primary and main intention of their Royal Founder; a Prince whose name is equally dear to Protestants of all communions. The mistakes on this matter, in this country and province, whether wilful or ignorant, have arisen from a partial and imperfect idea of the object of the Society. The objection represents their secondary and incidental design as their sole business; whereas, in truth, the Indian conversions are only subordinate to their principal most excellent and comprehensive object, that of giving all the

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<sup>5</sup>Matthew 20:15, King James Version.

<sup>6</sup>This was a fundamental complaint of Jonathan Mayhew and other pamphleteers Apthorp endeavored to answer.



British subjects on this vast continent the means of public Religion. If it be said, they have the means of Religion already, in other Protestant communions, this is not universally true: or wherever it happily is true; this brings us back to the claim of Liberty of Conscience. The means of public Religion are NO MEANS to him whose Conscience cannot use, or does not approve, them: no more than Popery or Mahomitanism afford the means of Religion to a good Protestant, who happens to reside in Popish or Mahometan countries.<sup>7</sup>

The mistakes on this subject have been made to appear very plausible, by citations from the Sermons of the Society, expressing the most tender solicitude for the heathen nations, and projecting the means and methods of converting them. This noble topic, of the extension and universality of Religion, has been managed by the preachers of the Society with great accuracy and erudition: and a theme so interesting and magnificent, could not but engage their frequent regard. But it is never so managed, as to exclude or undervalue their primary and only practicable object of establishing Churches in the English Provinces. Even while they most earnestly

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<sup>7</sup>New England Congregationalists in particular took great offense at being included with "Popery and Mahomitanism," especially since they had left England by reason of Conscience in the first place, and their own arguments were now being used against them.

recommend all endeavours for the effectual conversion of the bordering savages; they never lose sight of their "Principal aim, of remedying in the first place the ill state of Religion in our colonies themselves: and this with good reason, not only because most of the people here are of British extraction; and all of them their Fellow-subjects; but without this care, the conversion of the neighboring savages can hardly be effected."\*

But although the Indian conversions are undertaken by our Society incidentally, and as it were ex abundanti: yet they have omitted no opportunity of promoting this pious work; as far as they have found it practicable. In the very infancy of their incorporation, an attempt was made to plant Christianity among the Mohocks. The narrative of their mission to the Iroquois is extremely curious and useful: but too long to be transcribed.<sup>†8</sup> The ill success of a design so well concerted,<sup>9</sup> and encouraged by the piety of Q. ANNE, prove to a demonstration the impossibility of making any fixed

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\*Bp. of St. David's Serm. 1759. p. 4. 17. [A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, Friday, February 23, 1759, by Anthony Ellys, Bishop of St. David's (London, 1759). Only the phrase "Principal aim" is from page 4, the rest from a longer passage on pp. 16-7 (see Appendix B).]

†See Dr. Humphrey's hist. of the Soc., ch. xi. [David Humphreys, An Historical Account of the SPGFP (London: 1728), pp. 276-311.]

<sup>8</sup>Further information on this mission can be had from Frank J. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York (Freeport, N.Y., 1940).

<sup>9</sup>p. 15. line 15 conceived [concerted] 1763.

impressions of Religion on the minds of these military savages. Yet their unwearied zeal in this attempt was not checked by the disappointment. They continued this mission, after some interruptions; and the care of the Mohocks was committed to a gentleman<sup>+</sup> particularly and eminently qualified for this difficult work. It appears from the abstracts of the Society's proceedings, that "in 1742 there was a regular sober congregation of Five hundred Christian Indians, and a daily increase of virtue and good manners among them." "This," says Dr. Stebbing,<sup>\*</sup> "is a thing by no means to be despised: and how know we but these small beginnings may be the foundation of some great work, to be accomplished in God's due season." Similar accounts are continued for some years after. But notwithstanding this promising appearance, from the latest authorities, that have come to our hands, we find this Mission either much dwindled, or greatly interrupted, "the <sup>†</sup>Mohock's River having been in 1758 a scene of all the horrors of war."

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<sup>+</sup>Dr. Henry Barclay, now the worthy rector of Trinity Church in New-York. [Then missionary to Albany, including both English and Indian communities.]

<sup>\*</sup>See his sermon, p. 20 and Abstract, 1742, p. 48. [A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, Friday, February 19, 1741/2, by Henry Stebbing, Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty and Chancellor of Sarum (London: 1742). The whole quotation is from Stebbing. See Appendix C for the longer account in the Abstract.]

<sup>†</sup>Abstract for 1759, p. 61.62. [Abstract of the Proceedings of the SPGFP, 1759 (London: 1759). These Mohocks described as being victims of "French and Frenchified Indians" who attacked during the French and Indian Wars.]

That the state of Religion among ourselves is now so much superior to what it was, when the Missions were first appointed, is, under God, so greatly the work of the Society, that to give this Reason for withdrawing their protection from our Churches is to make the success and benefit of their design, an argument against it.

Every one, who knows the history of this Country must acknowledge, that in many respects the Religious State of it is manifestly improved: notwithstanding the immoralities and defects which we lament, and wish to reform in the present manners and principles. Religion no longer wears among us that savage and gloomy appearance, with which Superstition had terribly arrayed her: its speculative doctrines are freed from those senseless horrors with which Fanaticism had perverted them: Hypocrisy has worn off, in proportion as men have seen the beauty of Holiness:<sup>10</sup> and above all that exterminating monster Persecution, is itself exterminated both from the temper and practices of the age. Much indeed remains to be done in Manners and Piety; and to this good work the united efforts of all Parties, are no more than sufficient. The Society and the Church

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<sup>10</sup>I Chr. 16:29; II Chr. 20:21, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 96:9. KJV. A Favorite goal of Anglican worship experience, reminiscent to a Congregationalist reader of the hated Archbishop Laud's intentions for worship from which the Puritans wished to escape by moving to Massachusetts Bay.

of England it is hoped have not, and will not, be wanting in their most strenuous Endeavours to promote practical Religion. This is and ever hath been their Object; and solely in the view of successfully pursuing it, have they so liberally and extensively supported a public Religion in our Colonies. And it is reasonably hoped, that the candid and impartial will not impeach their Conduct, for what is most laudable both in its intention and effects.

But to take leave of this popular objection, with so full a confutation, that it will be disingenuous ever to advance it again: the writer confidently rests his proof on the unexceptionable testimony of two most candid and truly christian Prelates, who had both of them the best opportunities of being well informed, and were incapable either of mistake or misrepresentation in a matter so thoroughly known to them.

The first is that amiable Lover of Mankind, Bishop BERKLEY, whose life, studies, and great abilities were employed in improving the manners and prosperity of his Fellow-creatures. In his most instructive sermon before the Society, 1731,<sup>11</sup> the Bishop

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<sup>11</sup> A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, February 18, 1731, by George Berkeley, Dean of Londonderry (London: 1732).

speaks of America, as their peculiar Province; and mentions himself as "one who had resided a considerable time in one of our Colonies, in this very view of informing himself of the state and progress of Religion."<sup>12</sup> "In order to propagate the Gospel abroad, it is necessary we do it at home: the influence whereof would soon reach our foreign plantations, and extend throughout their borders. It should seem, that the likeliest step towards converting the Heathen would be to begin with the English. The Missionaries do good service in bringing them to a serious sense of Religion; which it is hoped will in time extend to others."<sup>13</sup>

This testimony is still more expressly supported by that of the excellent Prelate who now so worthily presides over the Church of England and the Society itself.<sup>14</sup> In his Sermon 1741,<sup>15</sup> he thus fully obviates all those objections, which even his great authority and invincible reasons have not been able to silence.

"To carry on the great work of directing mankind to present and future happiness, is the end of this Society; incorporated , FIRST for the support of Christianity in

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<sup>12</sup>Sermon 1731, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup>Sermon 1731, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Secker.

<sup>15</sup>A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, February 20, 1740/1 by Thomas Secker, in Fourteen Sermons Preached on Several Occasions (London: 1761). Apthorp has left out various phrases from the quotations which follow. Where large sections have been excluded which disguise the fullness of Secker's intent, reference is made to the Appendix.

our colonies and factories abroad; THEN, for the propagation of it among the Heathens; but taking its name from the remoter and more extensive part of the design. Every possible reason required our predecessors to begin with inspecting the state of the English plantations in America.<sup>16</sup> The Society therefore first sent over Missionaries to perform the offices of Religion amongst them.<sup>17</sup> The next object of their concern were the poor Negroes.<sup>18</sup> There still remains another branch of the Society's care, the Indians bordering on our settlements.<sup>19</sup> But after all precautions, it cannot be an easy work, to convert nations whose manners are so uncultivated, whose languages are so different, so hard to learn, and so little adapted to the doctrines of Religion; and who seldom continue long enough in the same place, to let any good impressions fix into habits."<sup>20</sup>

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\*It will be worth the Reader's while to consult Dr. Humphrey's account of the mission to the Iroquois. Hist. of the Soc., ch. xi. [see note 3] When the Gospel is introduced among Barbarians, by the power of Miracles; it has a great influence in civilizing them: And actually had that effect; as we learn from many instances in Ecclesiastical history. See the fine reflections of Eusebius on that subject; praep. Evang. 1.I c.4, But Religion in the ordinary method of teaching, presupposes a capacity and willingness to receive and retain its impressions, and to solemnize its Rites and Worship, which are incompatible with barbarous manners.

<sup>16</sup>Sermon 1740/1, p. 111.

<sup>17</sup>Sermon 1740/1, p. 113. See Appendix D.

<sup>18</sup>Sermon 1740/1, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup>Sermon 1740/1, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup>Sermon 1740/1, p. 116-7. See Appendix E for material following this section which Apthorp leaves out.

"A common benefit of propagating Christianity in our Colonies, is that thus we shall hinder corruptions of Christianity from prevailing there. Many pernicious errors took early root in these provinces: some, dissolving the obligation of moral duties: some, destroying the inward pace of pious and good persons, by making life gloomy and uncomfortable: some, leading men to ascribe every folly or wickedness, that professes the fancy, to divine inspiration.<sup>+21</sup> Hence, the importance of supporting Instructors in true Religion, were it only for a standing guard against the inconveniences of false Religion.<sup>22</sup>

"An objection to the conduct of the Society, is that they have sent Missionaries to some places, in which there were already Christian assemblies established and supported.<sup>23</sup> But in the least exceptionable of these Assemblies, there are several things, which the conscience of many we apprehend, with great reason cannot acquiesce in; who were not therefore to be left destitute of public worship; especially as our Charter was granted in express terms, for the maintenance of an orthodox clergy in those parts.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>+</sup>See Dr. Humphrey's hist. ch. ii.

<sup>21</sup>Sermon, 1740/1, pp. 123-4.

<sup>22</sup>Sermon, 1740/1, p. 125.

<sup>23</sup>The following sentence is left out here: "But in one sort of these Assemblies, there is no Christian ministry, no celebration of the Sacraments of the Gospel. In another, Infants are denied the Sacrament of Baptism."

<sup>24</sup>Sermon, 1740/1, p. 137. See Appendix F for material which follows this statement, left out by Apthorp.



We have obtruded the service of the Church of England no where: we have settled no Clergyman any where, without the inhabitants requesting it and contributing to it; we have sent no successor, upon a vacancy without their renewing that request. But if the provision, which we have made for the people of our communion, hath proved instrumental at the same time to bring others over to it: we hope there is very far from being any harm done. Indeed, unity of profession amongst ourselves, effected by methods of Peace and Charity, will greatly recommend our Religion to the infidels; who else may be tempted to continue as they are, for want of knowing with whom to join.<sup>25</sup> There can be no teaching at all, but in some particular form. We think our own the best.\* Every body thinks it far from the worst. At least, our converts will have the Bible put into their hands, to judge for themselves."<sup>26</sup>

The Reader will not only pardon but thank me for this long extract, the reasoning of which is so close,<sup>27</sup> yet so candid, that it must

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\* It is a good presumption that the Church of England is a reasonable Christian Communion, and free from all extremes in its constitution; that all the various Religious persuasions, at home and abroad, concur in holding it next in esteem to their own. Considering the force of prejudice, what in every one's judgment holds the Second place, may be supposed to deserve the First. For this observation, as far as I can recollect, I am indebted to a Fine writer, Dr. John Brown, author of the excellent Essays on the characteristics, of an Estimate of the manners, etc., and of some elegant and classical Poems.

<sup>25</sup> Sermon, 1740/1, pp. 137-8. Left out here is the following: "We acknowledge it, whoever is taught Christianity by our care, will be taught it as professed in the Church established here by law."

<sup>26</sup> Sermon, 1740/1, pp. 138-9.

<sup>27</sup> Apthorp's changes having limited Secker's argument in some significant ways.

convince every ingenuous person, and supercedes whatever might be added on this subject. The writer would only suggest a short apology for his undertaking to vindicate a Society, which is above censure, as it is incapable of wrong motives in the application of its liberality. This business, in truth, was forced upon him, by the frequent recurring of this topic, both in print and conversation, and by the honour done him of sharing in the insult offered to the late Dr. Miller of Braintree.<sup>28</sup> He promises, in amends, to employ his studies, for the future, to better purposes: and, in conclusion, adds his private opinion; that this truly Christian Society, the honour of our age and nation, cannot better apply their munificence, than in providing throughout our Colonies, for the decent celebration of public Religion. A Protestant Country, in such a Climate as ours, cannot well be overstocked with Churches, and resident Ministers. The different persuasions

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<sup>28</sup> Ebenezer Miller, Harvard class of 1722, SPG missionary in Braintree. The reference is to an item in the Boston Gazette, February 21, 1763, Miller's obituary. The writer, identified only as T.L., argued that a new missionary could be expected since, "the zeal of the Society for propagating the Gospel was so great, that they had lately established an Episcopal Mission in Cambridge, another of the most ancient Towns of N. England, but 3 miles from Boston, and the Seat of our College: Where there were hardly so many Natives, Africans and Heathens to be converted, as they were of them." (Wendell Garrett, Apthorp House 1760-1970, (Cambridge, 1960), p. 13) Hence Apthorp's efforts to describe the missionaries as functioning first among the English colonists, and only then the Indians and Negroes.

need not interfere with each other: they may even act in concert, as to the main end in view, that of promoting the Christian Faith and Virtue. And how rapturous is the prospect to the true Patriot, who unites his views of Policy with those of Religion; to behold this extensive country, just won to the British empire, gradually acceding, among its numerous inhabitants, to the empire of JESUS CHRIST, and of consequence, flourishing in Arts, in Science, and in Liberty both civil and religious!

Aspice, venturo laetentur ut omnia saeclo.  
 O mihi tam longae maneant pars ultima vitae;  
 Spiritus et, quantum fat erit Tua dicere facta!  
 Aggredere, o magnos (aderit jam tempus) honores,  
 CARA DEI SOBOLES! — — —

Virg. Pollio.<sup>29</sup>

Hark! a glad voice in lonely desert cheers;  
 PREPARE THE WAY! a GOD, a GOD appears.  
 All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;  
 Returning Justice lift aloft her seale;  
 Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,  
 And white rob'd Innocence from heaven descend.  
 No more shall nation against nation rise,  
 See, barbarous tribes, shall at thy gates attend,  
 Walk in thy light and in thy temple bend.  
 For fix'd thy word, thy saving power remains;  
 Thy ream for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Apthorp has taken several lines in different contexts from Eclogues IV (Loeb Classical Library, Virgil I, p. 32). As Apthorp uses these lines, they read;

Behold how all things exult in the age that is at hand!  
 O that then the last days a long life may still  
 linger for me, with inspiration enough to tell of thy deeds!  
 Enter on thy high honours (the hour will soon be here)  
 O thou dear offspring of the gods.

It should be noted that Apthorp casually changes the plural deum (gods) to dei (God) in the last line. Quotation was searched by Angela Askew, seminarian at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>30</sup>Apthorp's own verse?

## APPENDIX A

(A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, by Dr. Henry Stebbing, 1742)  
(pp. 18-19) (see footnote, p. 12 in the text)

"When some Men hear of Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, they are apt to think of nothing else, but converting Heathen Nations to the Christian Faith; which they look upon, as a Thing quite impracticable by mere human Means: And they, who thus think, and judge, can have no favourable Opinion of this Charity. But whoever looks into our Charter, will find, that the first and Principal End of this Corporation is, not to plant Christianity among Heathens, but, to restore, or to preserve it among Christians: Among those of our own People, who went from us in Possession of the Christian Faith, but lost it; or who, yet having it, are in Danger of losing it through the Want of God's Word, and Sacraments; without the regular Administration of which, Experience hath shewn them, and always will shew, that Christianity cannot long stand its Ground. The converting Heathens, is a secondary, incidental Point. For suppose, that our Colonies had settled in some uninhabited Island, they would then have nothing to do with Heathens. And yet it would have been just as necessary, that they should have had the Administration of the Word and Sacraments, the customary Disuse of which, will make Men Heathen, whether planted in Heathen Countries, or not...But as the case in Fact is, that our Colonies are settled in Heathen Countries, it is not at all unlikely, that if we can preserve Religion among our own People, many of the Heathens will be the better for it. Of a general Conversion of the native Indians I see no great likelihood at present."

## APPENDIX B

(A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, by Anthony Ellys, 1759)  
(pp. 16-7) (see footnote, p. 15 in the text)

"But this Society thought it self obliged, in the first place, to remedy, as far as possible, the ill state of religion in our colonies and plantations themselves; which was done with good reason, not only because most of the people there are of British extraction, and all of them our fellow-subjects; but because the conversion of the neighbouring savages to the Christian religion could hardly ever have been effected, while the inhabitants of our settlement had remained in so bad a state as they were some years ago."

#### APPENDIX C

(Abstract of the Proceedings of the SPGFP, 1742)  
(p. 48) (see footnote, p. 16 in the text)

"The Reverend Mr. Barclay, the Society's Missionary to Albany and to the Mohock Indians, writes from Albany, November 9, 1741, that he had received the Secretary's letter of the 24th of June 1741, and a Box of Books, for which he returns his humble Thanks, and says, it shall always be his sincere Endeavour to observe the Society's Instructions, in conformity to which he sends his Notitia Parochialis, by which it appears that his congregation at Albany consists of 180 English, besides two independent Companies, and in the Mohock Country of 500 Indians settled in two Towns at 30 miles distance from Albany, and there are 60 English, and 58 Indian Communities; and it gives him great Pleasure to see daily a great Reformation of Manners among the Indians, and especially in respect of Drunkenness; a Vice, which they were so intirely drowned in, that he almost despaired of feeling an effectual Reformation, but he had not seen above ten Persons Drunk among them in the last Summer, whereas at his first coming among them, almost every day afforded that, and sometimes double the Number...."

#### APPENDIX D

(A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, by Thomas Secker, 1740/1)  
(p. 113) (see footnote, p. 20 in the text)

"...then, Schoolmasters, to instruct their Children in the Principles of it; who, after enduring much Contradiction of Sinners,\* and going through a great variety of Labours and Difficulties, have, through the Blessing of God, made a remarkable Change in the Face of Things; and laid a noble Ground-work, of what, we hope, will every Day be carried on towards Perfection. But at present much remains to be done...."

\*Heb. 12:3

#### APPENDIX E

(A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, by Thomas Secker, 1740/1)  
(p. 234) (see footnote, p. 20 in the text)

(NB: "they" refers to those the SPG is trying to bring back to true religion.)

"If they are dishonest and profligate; every single Person here, who hath Concerns with them, will be in Danger of suffering by it. If they consume their Wealth and their Time in Vices and Follies; their Trade will be gained over, from them to Us, by our Rivals and Adversaries.

## APPENDIX E (cont.)

And if the Ties of a Religion, binding Men so strongly to be subject for Conscience Sake (Rom. 13:5), are loosened from off their Minds, which may some Time or another need every Tie, that can keep them attached to us; it will much facilitate their becoming Adversaries themselves. And we shall well deserve their revolting from Us, if we take no Care of their obeying God. But on the contrary, as Christian Principles will teach them Dutiness and loyalty; so receiving from hence the Support of those Principles, will recommend us to their Gratitude; hoping for the Continuance of that Support, will create some Dependence in point of Interest; and agreeing in the same Faith and Worship with us, will be an everlasting Motive to civil Unity also."

## APPENDIX F

(A Sermon Preached before the SPGFP, by Thomas Secker 1741)  
(pp. 137-8) (see footnote, p. 21 in the text)

"And members of this Church, I am sorry to say it, lying under peculiar Burdens in one considerable Province,\* which other Professors of Christianity do no, though equally Dissenters from the Majority there, they seem of Right entitled to some peculiar Assistance in return."

\*IN New-England They are rated to the Support of what the Independents, who are the greater Part of that People, call, though without Right, the Established Church. And the Goods of many have been seized, or their Bodies imprisoned, for Nonpayment. The Anabaptists, on their Petition, were exempted from paying this Rate; and the Quakers, without petitioning: but the Petition of the Members of our Church was rejected. (N.B. This Grievance hath been redressed, under the Administration of Governor Shirley, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay: and, I believe, since the year of 1752, in the Colony of Connecticut also.)  
[Editorial note in 1761 edition of the collected sermons of Secker.]



